

Pancakes a la Hopper by theamiableanachronism

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Summary: In which Dad Hopper and Daughter El discover whether or not waffles are just punctured pancakes.

Pancakes a la Hopper

The first time El Hopper tried pancakes, it didn't go quite how Jim Hopper expected.

For starters, if he'd known she'd never had them before, he might have stayed in the room instead of rushing off to get ready for work.

But he hadn't known, so he'd plopped the plate of flapjacks down in front of just-woken-up-and-still-in-her-pink-striped-pajamas El with a "Here you go," and headed to the back of the house.

Ten minutes later, he came down the hallway, pinning on his badge, looked into the kitchen and froze.

Neither El nor her plate of pancakes were at the kitchen table. Instead, she was standing next to the counter, watching the waffle-maker expectantly. How had she even known where the thing was? Not to mention how it worked? After a moment, she opened it with a click. By this point, Hopper had crossed the living room and so was able to see, from his position on the other side of the counter, that inside the waffle-maker was a pancake. An already-cooked pancake, now with waffle divots covering its surface.

He closed his mouth, which had been hanging slightly open as he watched, and licked his lips before opening it again.

"Ellie, what are you doin'?"

El looked up, hand still holding the lid of the waffle-maker.

"Making waffles," she said, as if it were obvious.

Hopper ran a hand over the lower half of his face to hide his grin.

"What, you don't like pancakes?" he asked straight-faced, swallowing an errant chuckle.

She gave a nearly imperceptible shrug. "Waffles are better."

"Uh-huh." He shot a quick glance at the clock on the endtable. Eight-

thirty. He looked back at his adopted daughter, her big brown eyes still watching him, almost like she was waiting for disapproval. He wasn't going to let that fly.

"Hell, kid," he said, letting the curse slip out of habit. They made brief eye contact, his mildly apologetic, hers mildly amused. He unbuttoned his cuffs and rolled up his sleeves, coming around to her side of the counter.

"There's an easier way to do this," he continued, lifting the punctured pancake out of the waffle-maker as he spoke. "Get me a bowl, lemme show you."

Flo watched Jim Hopper's truck pull into its slot in front of the station at nine-thirty A.M. from her desk by the window. With a click of her tongue, she stood up and made her way to the coffeemaker where she filled a paper cup with surprisingly still-steaming coffee.

Hopper sauntered in through the door and she met him with the cup and a sternly raised left eyebrow.

"Oversleep again?"

"Maybe you ought to look into getting an alarm clock or somethin', Chief," Callahan deadpanned nasally from where he and Powell were lazily engaged in their morning card game.

Hopper looked back to her unwavering gaze, already having sipped the coffee and now swallowing with a smile.

"Nah, didn't oversleep." His smile widened as he took in her disbelieving face. "I was just being a dad."

Flo clicked her tongue and shook her head, giving his chest a gentle slap.

"Give us a call next time."

Hop winked at her and took another cheeky sip of coffee as he meandered back to his office to start the rest of the day.